

THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

CLOSE-UP REPORT

JUNE 1994

Hurricanes. Floods. Fires. Earthquakes. This sounds like a description of the end of the world—and the events of the last two years have seemed apocalyptic. When Hurricane Andrew slammed into Florida's coast south of Miami in August 1992, hundreds of thousands of people lost their possessions and homes; hundreds of thousands of animals were killed, injured, or driven from their homes. The following summer brought the Great Flood of '93, the largest natural disaster in the Midwest's history. Fires blazed through southern California during

An HSUS Disaster Relief Team member helps a thirsty dog rescued from the Great Flood of '93. Floodwaters engulfed an Iowa shelter (inset).

HSUS/DANTZLER, INSET: HSUS/MADDOCK



SURVIVING DISASTERS

the next fall, charring more than 200,000 acres. And in January 1994, Los Angeles was rocked awake one morning by an earthquake that shattered houses, bridges, and roadways.

The toll in animal lives and suffering from these disasters will never be known. Animals were abandoned, lost, injured, and homeless. But The Humane Society of the United States, as it has been for decades, was there to help. And this unusually relentless pounding by nature has made it possible for The HSUS to hone the disaster response systems with which we have always aided the animal victims of disasters. We have also been given valuable new lessons about preparing for and coping with natural disasters, even those of unprecedented proportions. And there is good news: our new agreement with the American Red Cross (see sidebar, "HSUS, Red Cross Join Forces") means that we've enabled a greater recognition of the needs of animals by a major national relief agency—and combined two powerful forces for the benefit of all.

LESSONS LEARNED IN A HARD SCHOOL

It's heartbreaking that we must be taught by the suffering of animals, but we can turn our knowledge toward helping and protecting other animals. For many, one of the hardest lessons was Hurricane Andrew. No one had seen devastation on such a scale. No one was prepared. And few knew what to do in its wake.

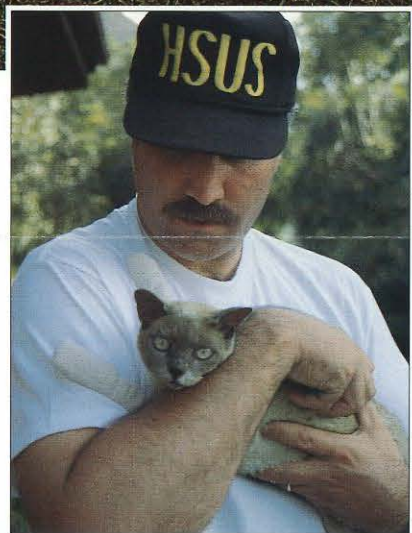
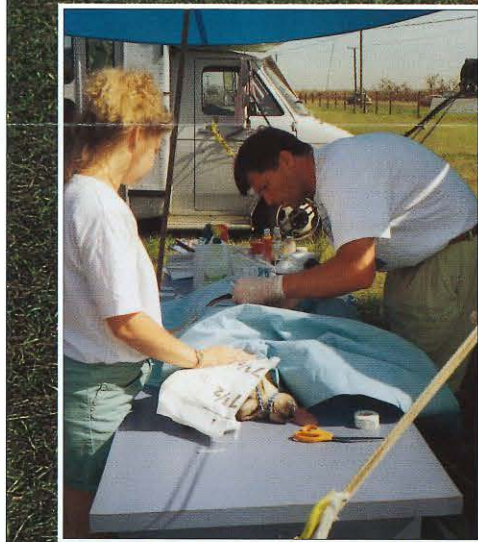
The HSUS was on the scene immediately, networking with other animal-protection organizations and disaster-relief agencies and supplying manpower to mobile veterinary units and field collection centers for lost animals. What we saw in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew brought to the forefront questions about disaster relief that desperately need

answers. Evacuation shelters usually do not allow pets—how can companion animals be provided for? More generally, what is the best way for The HSUS to function as a support and a resource agency for companion, farm, and wild animals before, during, and after disaster strikes? In 1992 we created the HSUS Disaster Relief Team to assess potential disasters and devise a strategy for responding to each situation.

A scant six months after Hurricane Andrew, flood waters in the Midwest began their slow rise to ultimately disastrous heights. The HSUS contacted animal-care and -control agencies, helping them coordinate and execute disaster relief plans. While flood waters raged, members of the HSUS

staff from four regions coordinated with staff at the HSUS headquarters to provide relief that spanned four states, lending manpower, resources, and expertise.

The team swung into action again when fires tore across southern California. The HSUS staff was immediately in contact with humane societies and animal-control agencies in the affected areas. We helped search smoldering rubble for pets who had been separated from their owners and assisted with animal evacuations and search-and-rescue missions for horses and other domestic animals.



Disasters' survivors: Lost, injured, and hungry animals receive desperately needed food, shelter, medical attention, and love from HSUS staffers and other volunteers on the scene following the devastation of Hurricane Andrew (top three photos) and the fires in southern California (bottom photo).



through the workshops, seminars, and training that we began in Hurricane Andrew's aftermath. At Animal Care Expos '93 and '94, day-long symposia on disaster preparedness and planning were prominent events, while numerous smaller workshops and training sessions have been held across the country.

A NATIONAL AWARENESS

Our goal is to deliver to the nation the message that we must incorporate an animal relief component into all disaster plans. Companion animals are such important beings in our lives; not knowing pets' fate is a crushing loss for disaster victims and may compound the pain of other losses at a tragic time. To save animals' lives and to spare people such anguish, The

HSUS is now spreading this message: every individual, every community, every town and city, every state, and the nation as a whole must have a plan to respond to disasters. Animals must be a part of that plan.

We know that the needs of animals must be addressed as part of any disaster response plan, and everyone, everywhere, should begin planning now.

We're broadcasting this message nationally, as well as to individuals. We've begun discussions with the Federal Emergency Manage-

ment Agency (FEMA) and have jointly developed a fact sheet on pets and disasters. A major breakthrough in achieving national recognition of the importance of helping animal victims of disasters came in March 1994, when The HSUS and the American Red Cross signed an agreement to work together on disaster training, assessment, and communications. The benefits of this agreement will be widespread, for both animals and people.

Our Disaster Relief Team swings into action when a disaster is expected or occurs. Our role is to support, to help, and to serve as a resource. We're also urging and promoting inter-agency networking and cooperation on local and state levels. The animal community—shelters and other organizations—and emergency management agencies must work together. Major groups across the country are interested in taking this vital step, and The HSUS is ready to help. We're also moving on the national level—we've begun discussions with FEMA to voice our concerns and to urge a greater response to animals' needs during disasters by federal agencies. By working together, we can all reduce animal suffering and human anguish.



Amid the chaos following the Los Angeles earthquake, many people sought their pets at an area shelter.

HSUS, RED CROSS JOIN FORCES

On March 16, 1994, The HSUS announced that the HSUS Disaster Relief Team will now work in cooperation with the American Red Cross in an effort to provide better disaster relief for animals. The HSUS will now be identified as an official disaster relief agency for animals.

The HSUS has always acted in support of local and state efforts on behalf of the animal victims of a disaster. The HSUS agreement with the Red Cross, however, moves our disaster relief to the next level.

In working with the Red Cross, The HSUS will utilize three key elements: first, an assessment of the situation; second, a strategy for response; and third, the delivery of services—which may include veterinary care for the injured and temporary food and shelter for lost, abandoned, and recovering animals. The HSUS will also advise local officials on problems relating to wildlife, livestock, or large animals.

"This agreement enhances our ability to provide disaster relief for the animal victims of disasters," said Paul G. Irwin, president of The HSUS. "It also provides some peace of mind to the human victims, who can rely on The HSUS to make sure the needs of animals are addressed. Victims of a disaster include both humans and animals, and relief should be directed to both."

IN CASE OF DISASTER: PROTECT YOUR PET!

Everyone can benefit from having a household evacuation plan in place. It's the best way to protect your family in case of disaster, whether it's a large-scale natural catastrophe or an emergency that causes you to leave your home temporarily. Every disaster plan **MUST** include your companion animals! Post this page in a visible and accessible place, and make sure every member of your family is familiar with the plan.

Keep up-to-date identification on your dog or cat at all times. Make sure the collar is properly fitted (avoid chain link collars for dogs and use break-away collars for cats). It's a good idea to have a friend's or family member's phone number on your pet's identification tag in case you cannot be contacted.

Have current color photographs of your pet, showing any distinguishing markings, with your emergency supplies. If you and your pet become separated, these photographs will help identify him/her.

If you know a disaster is imminent, bring your pets inside immediately! Get your animals under control as quickly as possible, either on a leash or inside a carrier.

Disasters often strike suddenly, while you're away from home. You can improve your pet's chances for safety if you leave him/her inside, with collars and identification tags, when you go out. Consider an arrangement with a neighbor who would be willing to evacuate your pet in your absence. Make sure that person knows your animals, can locate your emergency supplies, and has a key to your house. Provide him or her with instructions and phone numbers.

IF YOU EVACUATE, TAKE YOUR PET!



Your animal's best protection is to be with you. But remember, taking your pet requires special planning, so take the following steps:

- ☐ Locate a safe place for your pets **before** disaster strikes. Evacuation shelters generally don't accept animals.
- ☐ Call hotels and motels in your immediate area and a reasonable distance from your home. Ask whether they accept pets, under what conditions, and whether there are restrictions as to the size or number of animals.
- ☐ Call local boarding kennels and veterinarians with boarding facilities. Ask about their ability to house animals in case of emergency and/or disaster.
- ☐ Ask friends or family members whether they will provide foster care for your pets.

NOTE: Some animal shelters will provide temporary foster care for owned pets in times of disaster, but this should be considered only as a last resort.

DISASTER SUPPLIES FOR YOUR PET



- ☐ Portable carrier (essential for cats)
- ☐ Food/water bowls
- ☐ Supply of your pet's food and water in plastic bottles
- ☐ Litter and litter box for cats
- ☐ Supply of your pet's regular medications
- ☐ First aid kit
- ☐ Health records, including vaccination records
- ☐ Instructions on your pet's feeding schedules and diet, medications, and any special needs
- ☐ Leashes

IF YOU MUST LEAVE YOUR PET BEHIND...



Leaving your pet at home alone will place your animal at greater risk for injury or loss, so make every effort to take your pet with you. If you have no alternative but to leave your pet behind, there are some precautions you must take.

- ☐ Give your pet access to a safe, secure room without windows but with adequate ventilation, such as a bathroom. Leave enough food for at least three days (ask your veterinarian ahead of time what's best for your pet). A sufficient supply of water is critical. One animal can easily drink several gallons of water a day when under stress. Place water in containers that aren't easily knocked over, and leave a faucet dripping into a bathtub or sink with an open drain. If you expect flooding, provide access to elevated spaces or counters. Leave familiar bedding and safe toys.
- ☐ Don't confine dogs and cats in the same space. Keep small animals and birds safely caged.
- ☐ Make sure your pets are wearing proper identification (a collar and a tag).
- ☐ Place a notice on your front door advising what pets are in the house and where they are located. Provide a telephone number where you or a contact can be reached as well as the name and number of your vet.
- ☐ If you have a bird, leave food in dispensers that regulate the amount of food and supply extra water. Birds must eat daily to survive. Secure cages so they won't swing or fall. Cover the cage with a thin cloth or sheet to provide security and filtered light.

Never leave a dog tied outside!



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